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51
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AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 COPENHAGEN 0349

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, DA
SUBJECT: MOGENS GLISTRUP AND THE PROGRESS PARTY

SUMMARY: DESPITE THE UNPRECEDENTED INITIAL SUCCESS OF
THE PROGRESS PARTY IN BECOMING THE SECOND LARGEST IN
DENMARK IN ITS ELECTION DEBUT MORE THAN A YEAR AGO,
UNTIL RECENTLY OTHER DANISH POLITICAL LEADERS HAVE REFUSED
TO TAKE MOGENS GLISTRUP SERIOUSLY. HE HAS BEEN FROZEN
OUT BY ALL PARTIES, FROM COMMUNISTS TO CONSERVATIVES.
ALTHOUGH HE CAN BE PERSONALLY CHARMING, GLISTRUP PROJECTS
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AN UNSAVORY IMAGE TO MANY AND IS UNDER INDICTMENT FOR TAX FRAUD.

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE PROGRESS PARTY IS RECKETY AND HAS BEEN SHOT THROUGH WITH DISSENSION AND DEFECTION. SEVERAL OF GLISTRUP'S VOTE-GETTING PROPOSALS WERE STOLEN BY THE GOVERNING LIBERALS OVER THE LAST YEAR.

MOST OBSERVERS THOUGHT THE PROGRESSIVE PARTY WOULD CONSEQUENTLY LOSE HEAVILY IN THE JANUARY ELECTION. ITS ACTUAL LOSS OF ONLY FOUR OF ITS 28 SEATS CAN BE ASCRIBED IN ASCENDING IMPORTANCE TO DANISH IDENTIFICATION WITH THE UNDERDOG; THE APPEAL OF A MAVERICK; DISSATISFACTION WITH THE WELFARE STATE'S HEAVY TAXES AND WITH THE CONSTANT WRANGLING OF THE LEADERS OF THE TRADITIONAL PARTIES; AND GLISTRUP'S RECENT "REASONABLE" APPROACH TO CURRENT DANISH PROBLEMS.

GLISTRUP AND HIS PROTEST MOVEMENT ARE MORE THAN A PASSING PHENOMENON; HIS SUPPORTERS INCLUDE PERHAPS ONE-THIRD OF ALL "COMPANY DIRECTORS" AND ONE-TENTH OF ALL BLUE-COLLAR WORKERS. HE WILL PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE PRESENT FINELY-BALANCED PARLIAMENT. TRADITIONAL PARTY LEADERS ARE STILL ATTEMPTING TO KEEP HIM AT ARM'S LENGTH BECAUSE THEY FEAR THAT HE MAY CAPITALIZE ON HIS ACCEPTANCE TO THE DETRIMENT OF THE DANISH WELFARE STATE AS WELL AS OF THE COUNTRY'S CAREFULLY CONSTRUCTED SET OF RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE EC AND NATO. END SUMMARY.

1. MOGENS GLISTRUP, THE LEADER OF DENMARK'S PROGRESS PARTY, HAS BECOME AN INTERNATIONALLY KNOWN FIGURE WHO ORIGINALLY DREW ATTENTION BY CALLING FOR ABOLITION OF THE INCOME TAX, A DRASTIC REDUCTION OF THE DANISH WELFARE SYSTEM AND THE GOVERNMENT BUREAUCRACY, AND A DISMANTLING OF THE DEFENSE AND DIPLOMATIC ESTABLISHMENTS. UNTIL RECENTLY HE AND HIS PROCLAIMED POLICIES WERE HARDLY TAKEN SERIOUSLY BY OTHER DANISH POLITICAL LEADERS, EITHER OF THE RIGHT OR LEFT, OR BY THE "RESPONSIBLE" ELECTORATE AS A WHOLE. BUT HE WAS TAKEN SERIOUSLY ENOUGH BY THE DANISH RANK AND FILE TO WIN 16 PERCENT OF THE VOTE IN THE DECEMBER 1973 ELECTION AND HIS PROGRESS PARTY EMERGED AS THE SECOND LARGEST IN THE FOLKETING (PARLIAMENT) BEHIND THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS.

2. IN SPITE OF HIS SURPRISING INITIAL SUCCESS, IT WAS WIDELY BELIEVED THAT GLISTRUP'S POLITICAL LIFE WOULD BE RELATIVELY SHORT.
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ALTHOUGH HE CAN BE CHARMING AND HUMOROUS IN PERSONAL CONVERSATIONS, HE PROJECTS AN UNSAVORY IMAGE TO MANY. HE IS CORPULENT WITH HIS CLOTHES PERPETUALLY IN DISARRAY. HIS SATURNINE PHYSICOGNOMY AND HIS BULGING, HOODED EYES UNDERLINED BY PUFFY DARK BAGS MAKE HIM A DELIGHT FOR THE CARTOONIST AND CARICATURIST. HIS SPEECH IS MARKED BY THE UNPLEASANT SIBILANCE OF HIS NATIVE ISLAND OF BORNHOLM. IN TELEVISION PANEL DISCUSSIONS HE FREQUENTLY SHIFTS UNEASILY IN HIS SEAT, STEALING SIDELONG

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006

GLANCES AT HIS POLITICAL OPPONENTS WHO, IN TRADITIONAL DANISH POLITICAL FASHION, SIT ALMOST IMMOBILE AND EXPRESSIONLESS WHEN FACED WITH QUESTIONS OR ACCUSATIONS.

3. GLISTRUP IS UNDER INDICTMENT FOR TAX FRAUD. ALTHOUGH HIS OWN CASE GOES ON AND ONE, THE COURTS HAVE RECENTLY RULED THAT THE TAX ADVICE HE GAVE A CLIENT IN AT LEAST ONE CASE WAS CLEARLY ILLEGAL. HIS OWN FINANCIAL AND PRO-FESSIONAL FUTURE IS PRECARIOUS, WITH THE PROSPECT OF HUGE BACK TAX BILLS AND PENALTIES AND THE CERTAINTY OF THIS HAVING TO PAY, FOR THE FIRST TIME, HEAVY TAXES ON HIS CURRENT EARNINGS AS ONE OF DENMARK'S MOST CUNNING AND SOUGHT-AFTER TAX ATTORNEYS. BECAUSE OF ADVERSE PUBLICITY AND HIS POLITICAL ACTIVITY, HIS OWN HERETOFORE LUCRATIVE PRACTICE HAS SUFFERED.

4. THE ORGANIZATION OF HIS PROGRESS PARTY IS CASUAL TO SAY THE LEAST, REPUTEDLY WITH ONLY ONE FULL-TIME PAID STAFFER. THE PARTY'S UNSTABLE PARLIAMENTARIANS ARE A MEDIOCRE LOT WITH GLISTRUP HIMSELF THE ONLY NATIONAL FIGURE. IMMEDIATELY BEFORE AND DURING THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN, THE PARTY WAS WRACKED BY INTERNAL DISSENSION, DEFECTIONS, AND PROTESTS AGAINST THE DICTATORIAL IMPOSITION BY GLISTRUP OF CANDIDATES UNWANTED AT THE LOCAL LEVEL. SOME OF HIS KEY PROPOSALS, SUBSTANTIAL INCOME TAX REDUCTIONS, FOR EXAMPLE, WERE STOLEN FROM HIM DURING 1974 BY THE GOVERNING LIBERALS.

5. ALL THIS MEANT THAT DURING THE RECENT ELECTION CAMPAIGN MOST PUBLIC OPINION POLLS AND DANISH POLITICAL OBSERVERS BELIEVED HIS PARTY WOULD BE RETURNED TO THE FOLKETING WITH SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCED REPRESENTATION. IN THE EVENT, THE PROGRESS PARTY LOST ONLY FOUR OF ITS 28 SEATS. WHAT CAN ONLY BE DESCRIBED AS A REMARKABLE ACHIEVEMENT IN THE CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 04 COPENH 00349 01 OF 02 071311Z

CIRCUMSTANCES CAN BE ATTRIBUTED TO A COMPLICATED SET OF FACTORS.

6. THE DANES TRADITIONALLY IDENTIFY AND SYMPATHIZE WITH THE UNDERDOG. THIS CHARACTERISTIC IS CONSISTENT WITH THEIR PREOCCUPATION WITH THE SMALL SIZE AND LIMITED INFLUENCE OF THIER OWN COUNTRY. HENCE, GLISTRUP'S DISMAYING PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES AND HIS RAGTAIL PARTY WERE AN UNDOUBTED PLUS WITH SOME VOTERS. THE GENESIS OF HIS PARTY, IN FACT, CAME ABOUT AS A RESULT OF HIS BEING SPURNED. THE REMARK-ABLE YOUNG MOTHER OF FOUR, LISE SIMONSEN, WHO ALMOST SINGLE-HANDEDLY RUNS THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE PROGRESS PARTY, WAS ONE OF THOS WHO HANDED IT OVER TO GLISTRUP IN 1973 LARGELY OUT OF SYMPATHY FOR HIM AFTER HIS REJECTION AS A FOLKETING CANDIDATE BY THE CONSERVATIVES.

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006

7. GLISTRUP IS A SELF-PROCLAIMED MAVERICK WHO VIOLATES THE IMAGE OF THE PROPER DANE AND THE POLITICIANS ELECTED BY HIM. (THE DANISH COMMUNIST LEADERS, IN CONTRAST, GENERALLY PRESENT THEMSELVES AS PARAGONS OF BOUGEOIS PROPRIETY.) HIS EARLY ABSURDITIES WERE TO SOME A BREATH OF FRESH AIR IN A QUIET, CAREFULLY-CIRCMUSCRIBED, CRADE-TO-GRAVE EXISTENCE. HIS BOASTING OF HAVING OPENLY MANIPULATED THE INCOME TAX LAWS TO AVOID COMPLETELY ANY TAX PAYMENT PRODUCED A RE-ACTION OF DELICIOUS SHOCK IN A PEOPLE WHO ARE EXPECTED TO, AND DO, CANCEL THEIR OWN RAIL COMMUTATION TICKETS.

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PAGE 01 COPENH 00349 02 OF 02 071323Z

51
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAJ-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 COPENHAGEN 0349

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006

8. PERHAPS THE MOST IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION TO CONTINUED
SUCCESS IN THE FACE OF APPARENT ADVERSITY IS GLISTRUP'S
APPEAL TO THOSE WHO ARE FED UP WITH HEAVY TAXES AND THE
INCREASINGLY SMOTHERING EMBRACE OF THE WELFARE STATE.
AS THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY HAS MOVED LEFTWARD TOWARD THE
CENTER OF THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM, GLISTRUP IS THE ONLY
POLITICAL LEADER, OTHER THAN THOSE OF THE FAR LEFT, WHO
QUESTIONS THE BASIC ASSSUMPTIONS OF THE DANISH WELFARE
STATE ITSELF. THE RANKS OF THESE "FED UP" VOTERS ARE ALOS
SWELLED BY THOSE WHO ARE BORED AND DISGUSTED WITH THE
ETERNAL WRANGLING AMONG THE LEADERS OF THE TRADITIONAL PARTIES.
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9. FINALLY, THERE IS GLISTRUP'S NEW POSTURE AS A "STATESMAN".
WHEN HE HAS SPOKEN RECENTLY, HE HAS OFTEN MADE SURPRISING
SENSE TO MANY DANES. THERE IS LITTLE DISPUTE AS TO THE
VALIDITY OF HIS CALL FOR A THOROUGHGOING REVISION OF
THE DANISH TAX STRUCTURE. IN THE RECENT ELECTION CAMPAIGN
THERE WAS ALMOST NONE OF HIS EARLIER HYPERBOLE CONCERNING
TELEPHONE RECORDINGS OF SURRENDER IN RUSSIAN AND A DIPLO-
MATIC ESTABLISHMENT REDUCED TO TWO OR THREE PEOPLE IN
BRUSSELS. WHEN PRESSED, HE SAID THAT HE STILL HELD THESE
PERSONAL VIEWS BUT SINCE THEY WERE NOT SHARED BY A MAJORITY
IN PARLIAMENT, OR INDEED IN HIS OWN PARTY, HE WOULD NOT
PRESS FOR THEIR ACCEPTANCE.

10. OF ALL OF THE PARTIES' PRE-ELECTION TELEVISION PROGRAMS,
HIS WAS PERHAPS THE MOST EFFECTIVE AND APPEALING TO THE
"AVERAGE" DANE. IN A RECENT THREE-MAN TV PANEL SHOW
WHEN GLISTRUP APPEARED WITH FORMER PRIME MINISTERS POUL
HARTLING AND ANKER JORGENSEN, MANY REGARDED HIS APPROACH
AS THE MOST SENSIBLE OF THE THREE. WHILE THE OTHER TWO
TRADED HEAVILY-PARTISAN ACCUSATIONS ABOUT PAST PARLIAMENTARY
ACTIONS, GLISTRUP INSISTED THAT THESE WERE ALL BESIDE THE
POINT AND THAT NOW THE ECONOMIC CRISIS REQUIRED COOPERATION
ON STRONG FORWARD-LOOKING MEASURES. ON JANUARY 27, HE
DECLARED HIS WILLINGNESS TO CONTRIBUTE TO A PARLIAMENTARY
MAJORITY TO ASSIST THE GOVERNMENT IN ADDRESSING THESE
PROBLEMS. NOR WOULD HE BE OFFENDED, HE SAID, IF HARTLING
LATER TURNED TO THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS IN SEARCH OF A NEW
MAJORITY.

11.A GALLUP POLL TAKEN DURING THE TWO POST-ELECTION WEEKS
DURING WHICH HARTLING ATTEMPTED WITHOUT SUCCESS TO ENLIST
EXTENDED PARLIAMENTARY SUPPORT FOR HIS LIBERAL GOVERNMENT
SHOWS TAT THE PROGRESSIVES HAVE INCREASED THEIR POPULARITY
TO THE ALMOST 16 PERCENT THEY ENJOYED IN DEMCEMBER 1973.
ALL OF THE OTHER PARTIES DROPPED, EXCEPT FOR SLIGHT GAINS
REGISTERED BY THE TWO OTHER "UNCONVENTIONAL" PARTIES, THE LEFT

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006

SOCIALISTS AND THE CHRISTIAN PEOPLES PARTY.

12. GLISTRUP AND HIS PROGRESS PARTY NO LONGER APPEAR TO BE A PASSING PHENOMENON. HE HAS STRUCK A CHORD OF DEEP RESPONSE
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PAGE 03 COPENH 00349 02 OF 02 071323Z

AMONG MANY WHO ARE NOT ECCENTRICS. ONE SERIOUS STUDY, BASED ON A SAMPLE TAKEN ABOUT NINE MONTHS AGO, SHOWED THAT, AS EXPECTED, SMALL INDEPENDENT BUSINESSMEN COUNTED HEAVILY AMONG PROGRESS PARTY SUPPORTERS. BUT THESE SUPPORTERS ALSO NUMBERED ONE-THIRD OF ALL "COMPANY DIRECTORS" AND MANAGEMENT-LEVEL WHITE COLLAR EMPLOYEES. EQUALLY SIGNIFICANLTLY, THE STUDY SHOWED THAT 10 PERCENT OF ALL BLUE-CALLAR WORKERS ALSO VOTED FOR GLISTRUP.

13. GLISTRUP IS NOW TRADING ON THESE ASSETS TO COME OUT OF THE PARLIAMENTARY COLD. HE HAS BEEN HELPED BY NEWS-PAPER EDITORIAL COMMENT. ON JANUARY 25, FOR EXAMPLE, BERLINGSKE TIDENDE URGED THE THEN PRIME MINISTER HARTLING TO INCLUDE GLISTRUP IN A BROAD COALITION OF CENTER-RIGHT PARTIES SO THAT A MAJORITY GOVERNMENT COULD BE FORMED. DURING THE CURRENT SEARCH FOR A GOVERNMENT LED BY FORMATEUR KARL SKYTTE, GLISTRUP HAD DOGGEDLY HUNG ON AS ONE OF THE SEVEN (EXCLUDING THE FAR LEFT) PARTICIPATORY PARTIES IN THE FORMATION TALKS. WHILE HE HARDLY ANTICIPATES AT THIS STAGE THAT HE WILL BE ACCEPTED AS A PARTNER IN A GOVERNMENT COALITION, THE VERY FACT OF HIS PARTICIPATION ENDOWS HIS PARTY WITH AN INCREASED MEASURE OF RESPECTABILITY WHILE ANNOYING THE OTHER PARTIES.

14. MOGENS GLISTRUP HAS MODERATED THE EXTREME, OFTEN SILLY, POSITIONS WHICH WON HIM WORLD HEADLINES A YEAR AGO. HE CONCEIVABLY COULD END UP AS THE LEADER OF A PARTY WHICH HAD INHERITED THE MANTLE OF THE LANGUISHING CONSERVATIVES. THE LEADERS OF THE OTHER PARTIES, HOWEVER, STILL TEND TO REGARD HIM AS A CORRUPT OPPORTUNIST WITH UNACCEPTABLE PRINCIPLES AND POLICIES. (FROM A STRICTLY PARTISAN VIEWPOINT, THE TRADITIONAL LEADERS ARE ALSO WARY OF HIS POLITICAL CLOUT.) THEY SUSPECT THAT HIS RECENT APPARENT MODERATION IS ONLY A TACTICAL MOVE TO SECURE HIMSELF AN ACCEPTANCE HE WILL THEN CAPITALIZE ON TO THE DETRIMENT OF THE DANISH WELFARE STATE, WITH THE RESULT OF STILL FURTHER POLITICAL POLARIZATION. THEY ALSO UNDOUBTEDLY FEAR THE DISRUPTIVE EFFECT ON THEIR NATO AND EC PARTNERS IF GLISTRUP IS REGARDED BY THESE PARTNERS AS HAVING ACHIEVED A POSITION IN WHICH HE COULD HAVE A SIGNIFICANT AFFECT ON DANISH POLICY.
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Margaret P. Grafeld
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